

Special Event Application Guidelines



CITY OF
VICTORIA

The City can accommodate and, in many cases, welcomes special events in the public spaces of our community. We generally require community social and economic benefits in the proposed event plan and consider approval and provision of city services on that basis. Events should also be well organized and appropriately supported from the planning stages right through to clean up!

Our downtown is getting busier every year and it is getting increasingly difficult to manage all of the demands on public space. Impacts to businesses and residents who may be negatively affected by your event should therefore be carefully considered and disruptions minimized.

The following information corresponds to Special Event Permit Application form and is intended as a guideline to assist you in having your event approved.

Application forms must be signed and submitted by fax, mail or in person. **The person signing the application form is responsible for ensuring that all conditions are met.**

1. Event Description

(a-c) This information is to give a brief overview of the event.

(d) **Beneficiaries of Fundraising**

Profit-oriented events or those which are primarily intended as fundraisers will be required to pay for any required City services. The City will provide support for events raising some funds for charities, but only where this is secondary to investing funds in developing and sustaining the event.

(e) **Changes for this Year**

If the event was held in the past, identify any changes that will affect the planning or approval of the event.

2. Event Organizer Contact Information

(a-e) **Contact Information**

This is the person who is considered the event's one primary contact during the planning process. The contact person will be contacted directly to discuss and resolve all issues relating to the event. This person must ensure that the most current information relating to the event is communicated to and from the City and those involved in the event.

(f) **Public Liaison Person**

The person whose name and contact information may be provided to the public and media. It can be the same person identified as the primary contact.

(g) **On-Site Liaison**

An on-site liaison person must be identified and must be present and available via cell phone at all times during set-up, tear down and during the event. This person must have the authority to make decisions on behalf of the event organizer and must be accessible to City staff, Police and any other identified individuals or organizations.

3. Site Plan and/or Route Map

A picture is worth a thousand words! A site plan is required for each location used for your event. This plan should be **clearly presented**, drawn to scale and include the date it was prepared (any revised plans must include the date). The plan must include the location of all aspects of your event as described in your application. This includes clearly indicating the locations of stages, tents, cables, hoses, sound systems, portable toilets, litter bins, recycling bins and water holding tanks. All fencing, gates, entrances and exits, including emergency exits and fire lanes must also appear on the site plan. Fire hydrants cannot be obstructed and their location should be shown.

For parades, walks and runs associated with the event, the route as well as the assembly and dispersal areas must be identified on the map. Indicate whether the event will take place on the sidewalk or the street.

Note that modifications of the submitted site plan and/or route map may be recommended by City staff and other members of the Special Event Technical Committee prior to approval of the event.

4. Event Details

(a) Event Times

Start and finish times for each day of the event must be provided, including any additional days and times required for set up and tear-down (including clean up). If applicable, performance schedules and any other important times should also be provided. All contractors, suppliers and other persons involved in any way with the event should be aware of these critical times and are required to schedule work accordingly.

Setup and clean up times should only be as long as is necessary and should be restricted only to required areas of the site.

(b) Number of Participants and Spectators

The number of participants and spectators should be estimated as accurately as possible as they will be used to determine the requirements of the safety plan.

The number and type of vehicles and participants is required for parades, walks, runs or other processions.

(c) Notification Plan

It is critical that all residents and businesses not participating in your event are aware of your event and are minimally impacted by it. For larger events, it may be recommended that you consult with [Community and Seniors Centres](#) prior to submitting your final application.

Written notification must be provided to all businesses and residents likely to be affected by sound, parking or street closures. Notification must include phone numbers for contacts before, during and following the event. The City may require approval of the content of the letter and written proof of its delivery.

For some events, signage and notification in local media may also be required. In the inner harbour area, you may have to notify and consult with sightseeing tour companies and Ship Point businesses. For run events, property owners

(e.g. hotels, ferries) along Belleville Street from Menzies Street to Fishermen's Wharf may be affected and should be consulted. Consultation with any of these groups may occur after initial discussions with the Special Events office, but should be done in the early stages of planning your event (at least 2 months prior to the event with a reminder closer to the event date if necessary).

(d) **Traffic**

The impact of your event on traffic must be identified. City staff and Police may assist with developing a traffic plan which minimizes disruptions to business and residential traffic flows. Plan the times and locations of your events to avoid primary access routes to neighbourhoods (e.g. James Bay) and businesses (Inner Harbour Centre at Ship Point). Consider public transit in the area to minimize disruptions to [bus routes](#).

Note: emergency vehicles access may stop, delay or otherwise interfere with your event.

(e) **Alternative Transportation**

The plan must include your consideration of how participants and spectators will travel to your event. State specifically how you will encourage and facilitate alternative transportation methods such as cycling (e.g. bike lockups), carpooling and public transit. BC Transit may be able to provide enhanced service to and from the event site.

A schedule and plan for such considerations as vehicle access for set up, delivery of supplies and access for vendors must be provided.

Vehicle movement on site may not be permitted during times when the event is open to the public.

(f) **Parking**

Your event may require consideration of parking locations for organizers, performers, vendors, spectators and participants. City parking may be available to accommodate some or all of your needs. In the downtown, meter hoods will be used to reserve parking and where there are no meters, signage will be placed by Public Works crews. You should **limit your requests to the minimal number required** for no more than the needed periods of time in order to minimize the impacts on public users.

For runs and parades, removal of access to public parking along the route requires notification 5 days in advance of the event. Windshield reminder notices are distributed by the organizer the evening before the event and any remaining vehicles are towed at the time of the event. Towing may be either "ticket and tow" to an impound lot at the owners expense for those ignoring event "no parking" signage, or by a "courtesy" tow to a nearby location if the vehicle was parked prior to sign posting and notification which the driver may not have seen. The organizer may choose to pay for a courtesy tow in cases where the City would normally ticket and tow if you are concerned about neighbour relations.

Vehicles, including media vehicles, are not permitted on sidewalks, paths or grass areas unless they are a functional part of the event and have been approved in advance.

(g) **Accessibility**
Your plan should include provisions for access for persons with disabilities. This is important both for the disabled and the increasing number of elderly which may have an interest in attending your event.

(h) **Personnel**
It is extremely important that your event have an adequate number of properly trained staff and/or volunteers. The best laid plans require excellent execution to result in a well-managed event. Consider identifying staff or higher level volunteers as coordinators during your early planning. A designated “waste management coordinator”, for example, can thoroughly organize and supervise one portion of an event thus leaving you, the primary organizer, to higher level planning and management.

Volunteer marshals are essential for supporting barricades and assisting participants and pedestrians along the route of an event. It is the responsibility of the marshals to assist motorists and pedestrians in following the direction set by signage and barricades, not to control traffic or enter into conflict situations. They must be a minimum age of 16 years, wear appropriate safety equipment and have a full understanding of what they are expected to do.

Communication protocol and direction to volunteers during the event should be in place to prevent confusion and misdirection. The organizer is responsible for ensuring an adequate number of marshals are in position at all agreed times.

(i) **Sound**
Sound levels for entertainment, music and speeches at special events should not unreasonably impact neighbouring residents or businesses. Often, where sound is amplified, the allowable noise levels specified by the Noise Bylaw will be exceeded and an exemption to the bylaw will be necessary. All such events are required to have a plan for controlling the type and volume of sound produced by the event. The times, duration and level of sound must not result in unreasonable impacts to the surrounding neighbourhood.

For more information, consult the [Sound Policy for Outdoor Special Events](#) and the [Noise Bylaw](#). The Special Event Clerk may assist in advising you on a sound management plan. This may include location and orientation of performers and speakers, establishing a maximum allowable decibel level (the City can loan you an easy-to-use sound meter) and providing appropriate notification to nearby residents and merchants.

The Parks Bylaw also requires Council approval to allow amplified music within City Parks.

(j) **Sale or Handouts of Food, Beverages and Merchandise**
Food, beverage and merchandise sales require approval in advance from the City of Victoria and must be described in your application (vendor name, products, location). Only event-related products may be sold on site. Sponsor products must not be sold during the event unless they too relate directly to the event (e.g. running shoes at a marathon). Sale of products which would significantly compete with similar products sold by adjacent merchants is not permitted.

All sale or handout of food and beverages requires health approval from the Vancouver Island Health Authority (Environmental Health Officer 250-519-3401). Cooking equipment requires inspection from the Fire Department (250-920-3361).

Event organizers are also required to comply with the [Capital Regional District Clean Air Bylaw No 3962](#) that prohibits smoking in areas where food and beverages are served or consumed, and within 7 metres of all building doorways, open windows and air intakes.

(k) Alcohol

Beer and liquor sales during an event require a [Special Events Permit](#) from the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch of the BC Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. Applications may be obtained online or at any government liquor store.

Requirements of the licensee include having “Serving it Right” certification and the applicant is responsible for protecting guests from any harm that may come to them as a result of drinking at the event. The operating hours for a beer garden may differ from those of the event, but must run no later than the end of the event or 10:00PM, whichever is earlier. Food must be available within the beer garden area and adequate washroom facilities must be available and meet Vancouver Island Health Authority requirements.

For events held in public (municipal) space, written approval from both the City and Police (250-995-7245) will be required, as specified in the Special Occasion Licence conditions. The City Special Events Office may recommend approval based on past experience with the event and confidence that the sales will be well-managed. All clean-up within a beer garden is the responsibility of the organizer.

(l) Sponsor Signs and Banners

Sponsorship acknowledgment is often required by organizers in order to secure funding for non-for-profit events. The City requires that this acknowledgment be restricted to playing a supportive role in event presentation and therefore the size and number of banners and signs are limited only to what is necessary. The primary and most visible information must be event-related. The area of signage allocated to sponsor identification may not be greater than 40%.

The location of all sponsorship acknowledgement including sponsor vehicles and tents, must be shown on the site plan. The times when sponsor or media representatives will be present on site must also be provided. Sponsor products unrelated to the event must not be sold, though samples may be handed out as a form of promotion. You will find more information in the [Guidelines for Sponsor Identification at Special Events](#).

(m) **Temporary Structures**

The location of larger structures such as tents, stages and portable toilets must be included on your site plan.

A tent is defined as: a portable shelter of skins, canvas, plastic or the like, supported by one or more poles or a frame and often secured by ropes fastened to pegs in the ground or other weighted items. Tents must meet National Fire Protection Association standards. All tents must also meet the CAN/ULC- S109 standard for flame resistant materials. A manufacturer's label must be attached to the tent stating that it does meet this requirement. If a label is not attached, it will be the user's responsibility to produce documentation from the manufacturer that the tent meets this standard prior to its acceptance.

Equipment, such as tents, must be secured using cement blocks (i.e. not pegs, spikes or ropes to trees) unless specifically approved, since many sites have underground services. The organizer will be charged for any damages resulting from unauthorized setup methods.

(n) **First Aid Provision**

For some events, first aid services will be required and locations of these services must be indicated on the map. The BC Ambulance Service may require an onsite contact and unimpeded access to the site.

(o) **Safety**

The site layout and installation should reflect considerations for safety hazards for your event. For example, electrical cords should be taped down and tripping hazards marked. Fire hazards should be identified, and where there is a hazard, management provisions will be approved by the Fire Department.

A minimum access corridor of 20' in width must be maintained on a street, or anywhere else designated by the Fire Department, to allow access by emergency vehicles. No materials which can not be quickly removed or displaced (e.g. barricades) can be situated in this corridor. Access to fire hydrants should also be unobstructed.

(p) **Security**

The applicant has a large degree of responsibility for the behaviour of event participants and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate security is in place. The event should be designed to avoid risk of unintended police call-outs. Specific costs of such callouts may be assessed to the organizer if risk has been identified and inadequately addressed.

Security personnel should be experienced and capable of handling the situations which they may face. They should be in position at all scheduled times and have emergency protocol and communication in place. Site design and event management (e.g. ticket sales) should also minimize risk of security problems.

City Police may assist with developing a security plan for your event and in some cases Police approval will be required.

(q) **Waste Management & Environment**

The City will pick up litter and empty public garbage bins in the normal course of its duties. It is the responsibility of the event organizer to make arrangements for waste removal and the pickup and haul away of any additional litter and refuse that is due specifically to their event and those attending it.

The City would like to make its events as environmentally friendly as possible. Applicants are required to describe how waste products will be minimized or substituted. Provisions for gathering and recycling returnables and compostable materials should be identified. Where there are food and merchandise vendors, measures to ensure separation and collection of cardboard, glass, metal and organics should be described. Any possible risk to the environment (e.g. spills) should be identified and addressed. Grey water collection systems may be necessary and details required.

5. **City Services**

Most events that are not-for-profit and that bring economic and social benefits to the community are provided with a basic level of city services (e.g. police support, some litter cleanup, parking signage and traffic control equipment).

A detailed list of requested services should be provided. Availability of any required City services and whether any costs will be waived will be determined before the event is approved.

Additional financial assistance may be available to assist outdoor festivals, celebrations and events held in the City of Victoria who rent the City's festival equipment. However, this is dependent on annual City funding levels and must be approved for each event each year. See the Festival Investment Grants application process.

(a) **Police**

The City may require the presence of police to ensure public safety. A safety and/or security plan will be prepared for all large events and for all events requesting closure of streets in the downtown area. The safety and/or security plan must include a commitment on the part of the organizer to provide or fund sufficient resources to complement those provided by the City and successfully implement the plan.

Only Police or others designated by Police have authority to undertake traffic control duties in the City of Victoria. Police must be on location where there are road closures. Any event using streets may not begin until the senior police officer on site ensures that the route is secured and all required resources are in place.

(b) **Fire**

Fire personnel may be required by the City to ensure public safety. Most requirements of the Fire Department will be undertaken during the approval process and through any required inspections of the site setup. In some cases, Fire Department services may requested, for example, to provide hydrant hookups or fire boat presence.

(c) **Use of City Parks and Greenspaces**

A Special Event Permit applies to events which are entirely or mostly located outside of a City Park. If an event is held entirely within a park, a Park Use Permit will be issued. The City of Victoria Parks Bylaw prohibits certain activities in parks and greenspaces. Where only part of an event is situated in a park, a site meeting with the Parks Division may be necessary and will be arranged by the Special Events Office. Expected requirements such as access to washrooms, additional garbage receptacles, keys to gates should be included here and can be discussed at the meeting.

(d) **Street Occupancy**

This should summarize your specific requirements for supporting traffic, transportation and parking from the previous sections (e.g. parking meter numbers, lanes and lengths of streets involved).

Public Works will normally provide and setup the necessary traffic control equipment (e.g. barricades, lane divider (bean) poles, signage) to ensure street occupancy needs are met and the safety of participants and the public is ensured.

(e) **Equipment**

The City of Victoria may be able to lend organizers traffic control equipment, such as barricades, cones, lane divider (bean) poles and safety vests, for their own deployment. A deposit for equipment may be required. Note that barricades provided by event organizers must meet WCB standards.

City festival equipment may be available for events in the City of Victoria. **A deposit and rental fees may be required in advance of the event.** For more information see the [Equipment Rental Request](#) forms or connect with the Festival & Event Coordinators at the Arts, Culture and Events office by emailing culture@victoria.ca.

(f) **Access to Water or Power**

The City of Victoria may be able to provide access to water or power at some sites. Describe how much power is required and how you intend to distribute it. All safety precautions should be outlined and a [Temporary Entertainment \(Electrical\) Permit](#) may be required prior to event approval.

Insurance

Managing risk of damage to property and injury to persons is an important part of planning your event. You should identify any elements of risk associated with your event and ensure they are addressed before the event begins.

Permission will not be granted to hold your event until proof of satisfactory insurance has been received. All information required in the [Proof of Insurance Coverage form](#) must be completed and returned before a permit will be issued.

In signing the Special Event Permit application form, the organizer agrees to indemnify and save harmless the City in respect of any and all claims, demands, suits and costs arising out of any act or omission of the organizer or of any servant, agent or officer of the organizer arising out of or resulting from the use of the site/route by the organizer.

Waivers signed by event participants are recommended as a means of letting them know that there is some risk involved in participating in the event. This may reduce your liability should a mishap occur. For marathons and other higher risk events the City requires that both spectators and participants are covered by your insurance policy.

For events such as parades, you should also ensure that participants (e.g. marching bands) carry insurance that covers their liability.

General Conditions

- The organizer shall not use the site or route for any other purpose than that stated in the permit.
- Applicants must ensure their event complies with human rights provisions as described in the City's [Access to Public Facilities Policy](#).
- The organizer shall be responsible for returning the site, route and/or any City equipment to its original clean condition following the event
- The organizer shall be liable for any damage done to the site or route or City equipment during the event
- Nothing can be fastened to, hung from or placed in boulevard trees, planters or other City property without specific permission
- No posters advertising the event are to be located on any public property, such as lamp posts, park benches and building walls. Posters may be taped only to poster cylinders provided on designated lamp poles in the downtown, or placed on private property with the owner's permission
- Distribution of any pamphlet, handbill, circular, flyer or other printed, typed or written matter is prohibited at the event or at any time prior to the event except as approved on the permit for notification purposes

ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS AND COMMENTS WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE APPROVED PERMIT.

Cancellation

The City retains the right to cancel the event up to and including the day of the event, or at any time during the event in an emergency or if the applicant does not adhere to this or any other related permit conditions (e.g. Noise Bylaw Exemption, Parks). Organizers must designate a named on-site liaison person with authority to ensure compliance with permit conditions or stop the event if necessary at any time during the event.